



Czechoslovakia in the World War II .

Lesson Plan

1) Historical quiz – Introduction to topic

Pupils are working with the books or internet resources.

- Make 8 groups. In could be pairs or bigger groups.
- Hand out the historical quiz (*Worksheet Nr. 1*). Each group gets one question from the quiz.
- Pupils are answering questions in the groups.
- Check the correct answers (using the text "*Czechoslovakia in the World War II*")
- Write the important information on the black board or flipchart.

Key to the Quiz

No, No

Munich, 29th September 1938

German troops, Anschluss of Austria

Battle of Britain, Czechoslovak pilots fought in this battle

Reinhard Heydrich, former Czechoslovak soldiers coming from Britain

Dukla, Red army troops and Czechoslovak troops formed in Soviet Union

George S. Patton, Pilsen

5th - 9th May 1945, Liberation of Prague (End of the World War II in Europe), Red army troops



2) Time line

- Make 8 new groups or use the same groups from the 1st part. *It is useful to have less gifted pupil, normal pupil and well gifted pupil in one group.*
- Less gifted pupils draw a time line on the paper belt and write important dates from the quiz.
- Normal pupils mark the mentioned events to the line and write the basic information about the events.
- Well gifted pupils write additional information about the events, put the photos. *(see Annex Nr. 1)*
- Each group presents his work.
- Check the correct answers.

Extra ideas

- Pupils can add extra information to the timeline *(see Annex Nr. 2)*
- Pupils can make a computer presentation about their event.
- Pupils can make the front page of newspaper informing about their event. They can "sell" their newspapers then (like paperboys).
- Pupils can play their events like a role-play.



Czechoslovakia in the World War II .

Czechoslovak border fortifications

The Czechoslovak government built a system of border fortifications from 1935 to 1938 as a defensive countermeasure against the rising threat of Nazi Germany that later materialized in the German offensive plan called Fall Grün. The objective of the fortifications was to prevent the taking of key areas by an enemy (not only Germany but also Hungary) by means of a sudden attack before the mobilization of the Czechoslovak army could be completed, and to enable effective defense until allies (France and possibly the Soviet Union) could help.

With the rise of Hitler and his demands for unification of German minorities (the Sudeten Germans) and return of other claimed territories (the Sudetenland), the alarmed Czechoslovak leadership began defensive plans. While some basic defensive structures were built early on, it was not until after conferences with French military on their designs that a full scale effort began.

A change in the design philosophy was noticeable in the "pillboxes" and larger Blockhouses similar to the French Maginot line when the massive construction program began in 1936. Construction was very rapid, and by the time of the Munich Agreement in September 1938 about 20% of the heavy objects and 70% of the light objects were completed, however most of the remainder were near completion and would have been functional despite missing certain heavy armaments in some structures. The total planned (and nearly all mostly completed) was 10,014 light pillboxes and 264 heavy bunkhouses (small forts).

The original plan was to have the first stage of construction finished in 1941-42, whilst the full system should have been completed by early 1950s.

After the German occupation of Czechoslovakia border regions as a result of the "Sudeten crisis", the Germans used these objects to test and develop new weapons and tactics, plan, and practice the attacks eventually used against the Maginot Line and Belgium's forts (the most notable is Fort Eben-Emael), resulting in astounding



success. After the fall of Belgium, France and the Low Countries, the Germans began to dismantle the "Beneš Wall", blowing up the cupolas, or removing them and the cannon/MG embrasures, some of which were eventually installed in the Atlantic Wall against the Allies.

Later in the war, with the collapsing German front by the Soviet forces to the east, the Germans hurriedly repaired what they could of the fortifications, often just bricking up the holes where the cannon/MG embrasures once were, leaving a small hole for a machine gun. The east-west portion of the line that ran from Ostrava to Opava is a river valley with a steep rise to the south and became the scene of intense fighting. It is unknown how much those fortifications were vital to German defense, but it is known they caused some pause to the Soviet advance.

During World War II Germans had removed many armored parts like domes, cupolas and embrasures from the majority of objects. Some objects became subjects of German penetration shells or explosives testing and are heavily damaged. In the post-war period, many of the remaining armoured parts were scrapped as a result of a loss of their strategic value and general drive for steel.

After the war they were further stripped of useful materials, and then sealed. A couple of the large underground structures continued to be used long after as military hardware storage, to this day, by the now once again independent Czech military, 60 years later.

Munich Agreement

The Munich Pact (Czech: *Mnichovská dohoda*; Slovak: *Mníchovská dohoda*; German: *Münchner Abkommen*; French: *Accords de Munich*; Italian: *Accordi di Monaco*) was an agreement permitting the Nazi German annexation of Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland. The Sudetenland were areas along Czech borders, mainly inhabited by ethnic Germans. The agreement was negotiated at a conference held in Munich, Germany, among the major powers of Europe without the presence of Czechoslovakia. Today, it is widely regarded as a failed act of appeasement toward Nazi Germany. The agreement was signed in the early hours of 30th September 1938



(but dated 29th September). The purpose of the conference was to discuss the future of the Sudetenland in the face of territorial demands made by Adolf Hitler. The agreement was signed by Nazi Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and Italy. The Sudetenland was of immense strategic importance to Czechoslovakia, as most of its border defenses were situated there, and many of its banks were located there as well.

Because the state of Czechoslovakia was not invited to the conference, Czechs and Slovaks sometimes call the Munich Agreement the Munich Dictate (Czech: *Mnichovský diktát*; Slovak: *Mníchovský diktát*). The phrase Munich Betrayal (Czech: *Mnichovská zrada*; Slovak: *Mníchovská zrada*) is also used because the military alliance Czechoslovakia had with France was not honoured. Today the document is typically referred to simply as the Munich Pact (*Mnichovská dohoda*).

The Pressure on Czechoslovak government

As the previous appeasement of Hitler had shown, the governments of both France and the United Kingdom were set on avoiding war at any cost. The French government did not wish to face Nazi Germany alone and took its lead from the British government and its Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain. Chamberlain believed that Sudeten German grievances were justified and that Hitler's intentions were limited. Both Britain and France, therefore, advised Czechoslovakia to concede to the Nazi demands. Beneš resisted and on May 20th a partial mobilization was underway in response to possible German invasion. Ten days later, Hitler signed a secret directive for war against Czechoslovakia to begin no later than October 1st.

In the meantime, the British government demanded that Beneš request a mediator. Not wishing to sever his government's ties with Western Europe, Beneš reluctantly accepted. The British appointed Lord Runciman and instructed him to persuade Beneš to agree to a plan acceptable to the Sudeten Germans. On September 2nd. Beneš submitted the Fourth Plan, granting nearly all the demands of the Munich Agreement. Intent on obstructing conciliation, however, the SdP held demonstrations that provoked police action in Ostrava on September 7th. The Sudeten Germans



broke off negotiations on September 13th, after violence and disruption ensued. As Czechoslovak troops attempted to restore order, Henlein flew to Germany and on September 15th issued a proclamation demanding the takeover of the Sudetenland by Germany.

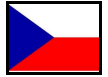
On the same day, Hitler met with Chamberlain and demanded the swift takeover of the Sudetenland by the Third Reich under threat of war. The Czechs, Hitler claimed, were slaughtering the Sudeten Germans. Chamberlain referred the demand to the British and French governments; both accepted. The Czechoslovak government resisted, arguing that Hitler's proposal would ruin the nation's economy and lead ultimately to German control of all of Czechoslovakia. The United Kingdom and France issued an ultimatum, making a French commitment to Czechoslovakia contingent upon acceptance. On September 21st, Czechoslovakia capitulated. The next day, however, Hitler added new demands, insisting that the claims of ethnic Germans in Poland and Hungary also be satisfied.

The Czechoslovak capitulation precipitated an outburst of national indignation. In demonstrations and rallies, Czechs and Slovaks called for a strong military government to defend the integrity of the state. A new cabinet, under General Jan Syrový, was installed and on September 23rd a decree of general mobilization was issued. The Czechoslovak army, modern and possessing an excellent system of frontier fortifications, was prepared to fight. The Soviet Union announced its willingness to come to Czechoslovakia's assistance. Beneš, however, refused to go to war without the support of the Western powers.

On September 28th, Chamberlain appealed to Hitler for a conference. Hitler met the next day, at Munich, with the chiefs of governments of France, Italy and the United Kingdom. The Czechoslovak government was neither invited nor consulted.

Resolution

A deal was reached on 29th September, and at about 1:30am on 30th September 1938, Adolf Hitler, Neville Chamberlain, Benito Mussolini and Édouard Daladier signed



the Munich Agreement. The agreement was officially introduced by Mussolini although in fact the so-called Italian plan had been prepared in the German Foreign Office. It was nearly identical to the Godesberg proposal: the German army was to complete the occupation of the Sudetenland by 10th October, and an international commission would decide the future of other disputed areas.

Czechoslovakia was informed by Britain and France that it could either resist Nazi Germany alone or submit to the prescribed annexations. The Czechoslovak government realizing the hopelessness of fighting the Nazis alone, reluctantly capitulated (30th September) and agreed to abide by the agreement. The settlement gave Germany the Sudetenland starting 10th October and *de facto* control over the rest of Czechoslovakia as long as Hitler promised to go no further. On September 30th after some rest, Chamberlain went to Hitler and asked him to sign a peace treaty between the United Kingdom and Germany. After Hitler's interpreter translated it for him, he happily agreed.

On 30th September, upon his return to Britain, Chamberlain delivered his famous "peace for our time" speech to delighted crowds in London.

German occupation of Czechoslovakia

German occupation of Czechoslovakia (1938–1945) began with the Nazi annexation of Czechoslovakia's northern and western border regions, known collectively as the Sudetenland, under terms outlined by the Munich Agreement. Nazi leader Adolf Hitler's pretext for this effort was the alleged privations suffered by ethnic German populations living in those regions. There also existed new and extensive Czechoslovak border fortifications in the same area.

Following the *Anschluss* of Nazi Germany and Austria, in March 1938, the conquest of Czechoslovakia became Hitler's next ambition. The incorporation of Sudetenland into Nazi Germany left the rest of Czechoslovakia weak and it became powerless to resist subsequent occupation. On 16th March 1939, the German *Wehrmacht* moved into the remainder of Czechoslovakia and, from Prague Castle, Hitler proclaimed



Bohemia and Moravia the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The occupation ended with the surrender of Germany following World War II.

The Second Republic (October 1938 to March 1939)

The greatly weakened Czechoslovak Republic was forced to grant major concessions to the non-Czechs. The executive committee of the Slovak People's Party met at Žilina on 5th October 1938, and with the acquiescence of all Slovak parties except the Social Democrats formed an autonomous Slovak government under Jozef Tiso. Similarly, the two major factions in Subcarpathian Ruthenia, the Russophiles and Ukrainophiles, agreed on the establishment of an autonomous government, which was constituted on 8th October. Reflecting the spread of modern Ukrainian national consciousness, the pro-Ukrainian faction, led by Avhustyn Voloshyn, gained control of the local government and Subcarpathian Ruthenia was renamed Carpatho-Ukraine.

A last-ditch attempt to save Czecho-Slovakia from total ruin was made by the British and French governments, who on 27th January 1939 concluded an agreement of financial assistance with the Czech government. In this agreement, the British and French governments undertook to lend the Czech government £8,000,000 and make a gift of £4,000,000. Part of the funds was allocated to help resettle Czechs who had fled from territories lost to Czechoslovakia in the Munich Agreement or the Vienna Arbitration Award.

In November 1938, Emil Hácha—succeeding Beneš—was elected president of the federated Second Republic, renamed Czecho-Slovakia and consisting of three parts: Bohemia and Moravia, Slovakia, and Carpatho-Ukraine. Lacking its natural frontier and having lost its costly system of border fortification, the new state was militarily indefensible. In January 1939, negotiations between Germany and Poland broke down. Hitler—intent on war against Poland—needed to eliminate Czechoslovakia first. He scheduled a German invasion of Bohemia and Moravia for the morning of 15th March. In the interim, he negotiated with the Slovak People's Party and with Hungary to prepare the dismemberment of the republic before the invasion. On 13th



March, he invited Tiso to Berlin and on 14th March, the Slovak Diet convened and unanimously declared Slovak independence. Carpatho-Ukraine also declared independence but Hungarian troops occupied it on 15th March and eastern Slovakia on 23rd March.

Hitler summoned President Hácha to Berlin and during the early hours of 15th March, informed Hácha of the imminent German invasion. Threatening a *Luftwaffe* attack on Prague, Hitler persuaded Hácha to order the capitulation of the Czechoslovak army. Hácha suffered a heart attack during the meeting, and had to be kept awake by medical staff, eventually giving in and accepting Hitler's surrender terms. Then on the morning of 15th March, German troops entered Bohemia and Moravia, meeting practically no resistance (the only instance of organized resistance took place in Místek where an infantry company commanded by Karel Pavlík fought invading German troops). The Hungarian invasion of Carpatho-Ukraine encountered resistance but the Hungarian army quickly crushed it. On 16th March, Hitler went to Czechoslovakia and from Prague Castle proclaimed Bohemia and Moravia a German protectorate (Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia).

Thus, independent Czechoslovakia collapsed in the wake of foreign aggression and internal tensions. Subsequently, interwar Czechoslovakia has been idealized by its proponents as the only bastion of democracy surrounded by authoritarian and fascist regimes. It has also been condemned by its detractors as an artificial and unworkable creation of intellectuals supported by the great powers. Both views have some validity. Interwar Czechoslovakia comprised lands and peoples that were far from being integrated into a modern nation-state. Moreover, the dominant Czechs—who had suffered political discrimination under the Habsburgs—were not able to cope with the demands of other nationalities; however, it should be acknowledged that some of the minority demands served as mere pretexts to justify intervention by Nazi Germany. Considering that Czechoslovakia was able to maintain a viable economy and a democratic political system under such circumstances was indeed a remarkable achievement during the inter-war period.



Battle of Britain

Göring ordered attacks on aircraft factories on 19th August 1940; on 23rd August 1940 he ordered that RAF airfields be attacked. That evening an attack was mounted on a tire factory in Birmingham. Raids on airfields continued through 24th August, and Portsmouth was hit by a major attack. That night, several areas of London were bombed; the East End was set ablaze and bombs landed on central London. Some historians believe that these bombs were dropped accidentally by a group of Heinkel He 111s which had failed to find their target; this account has been contested. In retaliation, the RAF bombed Berlin on the night of 25th –26th August, and continued bombing raids on Berlin. Goring's pride was hurt, as he had previously claimed the British would never be able to bomb the city. The attacks enraged Hitler, who ordered retaliatory attacks on London.

From 24th August onwards, the battle was a fight between Kesselring's *Luftflotte 2* and Park's 11 Group. The *Luftwaffe* concentrated all their strength on knocking out Fighter Command and made repeated attacks on the airfields. Of the 33 heavy attacks in the following two weeks, 24 were against airfields. The key sector stations were hit repeatedly: Biggin Hill and Hornchurch four times each; Debden and North Weald twice each. Croydon, Gravesend, Rochford, Hawkinge and Manston were also attacked in strength. Coastal Command's Eastchurch was bombed at least seven times because it was believed to be a Fighter Command aerodrome. At times these raids caused some damage to the sector stations, threatening the integrity of the Dowding system.

To offset some losses, some 58 Fleet Air Arm fighter pilot volunteers were seconded to RAF squadrons, and a similar number of former Fairey Battle pilots were used. Most replacements from Operational Training Units (OTUs) had as little as nine hours flying time and no gunnery or air-to-air combat training. At this point, the multinational nature of Fighter Command came to the fore. Many squadrons and personnel from the air forces of the Dominions were already attached to the RAF, including top level commanders – Australians, Canadians, New Zealanders, Rhodesians and South Africans. In addition, there were other nationalities



represented, including Free French, Belgian and a Jewish pilot from the British mandate of Palestine.

They were bolstered by the arrival of fresh Czechoslovak and Polish squadrons. These had been held back by Dowding, who mistakenly thought non-English speaking aircrew would have trouble working within his control system. However, Polish and Czech fliers proved to be especially effective. The pre-war Polish Air Force had lengthy and extensive training, and high standards; with Poland conquered and under brutal German occupation, the pilots of No. 303 (Polish) Squadron, the highest-scoring Allied unit, were strongly motivated. Josef František, a Czech regular airman who had flown from the occupation of his own country to join the Polish and then French air forces before arriving in Britain, flew as a guest of 303 Squadron and was ultimately credited with the highest "RAF score" in the Battle of Britain.

The RAF had the advantage of fighting over home territory. Pilots who bailed out of their downed aircraft could be back at their airfields within hours. For *Luftwaffe* aircrews, a bailout over England meant capture, while parachuting into the English Channel often meant drowning or death from exposure. Morale began to suffer, and *Kanalkrankheit* ("Channel sickness") – a form of combat fatigue – began to appear among the German pilots. Their replacement problem was even worse than the British.

Operation Anthropoid

Operation Anthropoid was the code name for the targeted killing of top German SS leader Reinhard Heydrich. He was the chief of the Reich Main Security Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, or RSHA), the acting Protector of Bohemia and Moravia, and a chief planner of the Final Solution, the Nazi German programme for the genocide of the Jews of Europe.

Planning

The operation was given the codename "*Anthropoid*". With the British Special Operations Executive (SOE), preparation began on October 20th 1941. Warrant



Officer Jozef Gabčík and Staff Sergeant Karel Svoboda were chosen to carry out the operation on October 28th 1941 (Czechoslovakia's Independence Day). Svoboda was replaced with Jan Kubiš after a head injury during training, causing delays in the mission, as Kubiš had not completed training and had not the necessary false documents been prepared for him.

Insertion

Jozef Gabčík and Jan Kubiš were airlifted along with seven soldiers from Czechoslovakia's army-in-exile in the United Kingdom and two other groups named *Silver A* and *Silver B* (who had different missions) by a Royal Air Force Halifax of No. 138 Squadron into Czechoslovakia at 10pm on December 28th 1941. Gabčík and Kubiš landed near Nehvizdy east of Prague; although the plan was to land near Pilsen, the pilots had problems with orientation. The soldiers then moved to Pilsen to contact their allies, and from there on to Prague, where the attack was planned.

In Prague, they contacted several families and anti-Nazi organisations who helped them during the preparations for the targeted kill. Gabčík and Kubiš initially planned to kill Heydrich on a train, but after examination of the logistics, they realised that this was not possible. The second plan was to kill him on the road in the forest on the way from Heydrich's seat to Prague. They planned to pull a cable across the road that would stop Heydrich's car but, after waiting several hours, their commander, Lt. Adolf Opálka (from the group *Out Distance*), came to bring them back to Prague. The third plan was to kill Heydrich in Prague.

The Attack in Prague

On May 27th 1942, at 10:30 AM, Heydrich proceeded on his daily commute from his home in Panenské Břežany to Prague Castle. Gabčík and Kubiš waited at the tram stop on the curve near Bulovka Hospital in Prague 8-Libeň. Valčík was positioned about 100 metres north of Gabčík and Kubiš as lookout for the approaching car. As Heydrich's open-topped Mercedes-Benz neared the pair, Gabčík stepped in front of the vehicle, trying to open fire, but his Sten gun jammed. Heydrich ordered his



driver, SS-Oberscharführer Klein, to stop the car. When Heydrich stood up to try to shoot Gabčík, Kubiš threw a modified anti-tank grenade at the vehicle, and its fragments ripped through the car's right-rear fender, embedding shrapnel and fibres from the upholstery into Heydrich's body, even though the grenade failed to enter the car. Kubiš was also injured by the shrapnel. Heydrich, apparently unaware of his shrapnel injuries, got out of the car, returned fire and tried to chase Gabčík but soon collapsed. Klein returned from his abortive attempt to chase Kubiš, and Heydrich ordered him to chase Gabčík. Klein was shot twice by Gabčík (who was now using his revolver) and wounded in the pursuit. The soldiers were initially convinced that the attack had failed.

Heydrich was taken to Bulovka Hospital, 250 m away. There he was operated on by Professor Hollbaum, a Silesian German who was chairman of surgery at Charles University in Prague, assisted by Dr. W. Dick, the Sudeten German chief of surgery at the hospital. The surgeons reinflated the collapsed left lung, removed the tip of the fractured eleventh rib, sutured the torn diaphragm, inserted several catheters and removed the spleen, which contained a grenade fragment and upholstery material. The surgery lasted an hour and went uneventfully. Heydrich's direct superior, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler, sent his personal physician, Karl Gebhardt, who arrived that evening. After May 29th, Heydrich was entirely in the care of SS physicians. Postoperative care included administration of large amounts of morphine. There are contradictory accounts concerning whether sulfanilamides were given, but Gebhardt testified at his 1947 war crimes trial that they were not. The patient developed a fever of 38-39 °C and wound drainage. After seven days, his condition appeared to be improving when, while sitting up eating a noon meal, he collapsed and went into shock, dying the next morning. His physicians concluded that he had died from infection of his wounds. It has also been suggested that he died of a cerebral or pulmonary embolism.

Battle of the Dukla Pass

Battle of the Dukla Pass, also known as the Dukla / Carpatho-Dukla / Rzeszów-Dukla / Dukla-Prešov Offensive was the scene of bitterly contested battle for the Dukla



Pass (borderland between Poland and Slovakia) on the Eastern Front of World War II between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in September-October 1944. German resistance was much harder than expected. The battle which began on 8th September would not see the Soviet forces on the other side of the pass until 6th October, and German forces would stop their heavy resistance in the region only around 10th October. Five days to Prešov turned into fifty days to Svidník alone with over 70,000 casualties on both sides. Prešov that was to be reached in six days remained beyond the Czechoslovaks' grasp for four months. The battle would be counted among one of the most bloody in the entire Eastern Front and in the history of Slovakia; one of the valleys in the pass near villages of Kapisova, Chyrowa, Iwla and Głojsce would become known as the *Valley of Death*.

Background

In summer 1944, Slovaks rebelled against the Nazis and the Czechoslovak government appealed to Soviets for help. On 31st August, Soviet marshal Ivan Konev was ordered to prepare plans for an offensive to destroy Nazi forces in Slovakia. The plan was to push through the old Slovak-Polish border in the Carpathian Mountains via the Dukla Pass near Svidník to penetrate into Slovakia proper.

In the meantime, however, the Germans had fortified the region, forming the *Karpatenfestung* or *Árpád line*.

Battle

The Soviet operation plan called for the Soviet forces to cross the pass and capture the town of Prešov within five days.

The operation started on 8th September. It took the Soviets three days to take Krosno (it was captured on 11th September). One of the biggest battles in the pass took place on and around Hill 534 in the northwest from the town of Dukla; the battle to capture this hill lasted from 10th -20th September, and during that period the control of the hill changed more than 20 times. The town of Dukla was seized on 21st September. The area of the former Czechoslovakian state border—heavily fortified by



the Germans—was captured on 6th October; it took almost a month for the Soviet forces to reach Slovakia.

The Dukla operation did not end when the Soviets forced the pass. The combat zone shifted to Eastern Slovakia, with Soviet forces trying to outflank and push back the German forces, still strong and having many fortified positions. South of the pass and directly west of the village of Dobraslava lies an area which has come to be known as the "Valley of Death." Here Soviet and German armor clashed in a miniature reenactment of the great tank battle of Kursk. Soviet and Czechoslovak forces would enter Svidník on 28th October. A major German fortified position near the pass, Hill 532 "Obšár", would be secured as late as on 25th November 1944.

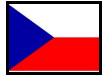
George S. Patton

George Smith Patton, Jr. (November 11th 1885 – December 21st 1945) was a United States Army officer best known for his leadership while commanding corps and armies as a general during World War II. He was also well known for his eccentricity and controversial outspokenness.

Patton was commissioned in the U.S. Army after his graduation from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1909. In 1916–17, he participated in the unsuccessful Pancho Villa Expedition, a U.S. operation that attempted to capture the Mexican revolutionary. In World War I, he was the first officer assigned to the new United States Tank Corps and saw action in France. In World War II, he commanded corps and armies in North Africa, Sicily, and the European Theater of Operations. In 1944, Patton assumed command of the U.S. Third Army, which under his leadership advanced farther, captured more enemy prisoners, and liberated more territory in less time than any other army in military history

Final offensive operations

On April 14th, 1945 Patton was promoted to a full General with a four-star rank, a promotion long advocated by Secretary of War Stimson in recognition of Patton's battle accomplishments during 1944. Patton's operations staff was drafting plans to



take Prague, when Eisenhower, under pressure from the Soviets, ordered American forces in Czechoslovakia to stop short of the city limits. Patton's troops liberated Pilsen, on May 6th 1945, and most of western Bohemia.

In its advance from the Rhine to the Elbe, Patton's Third Army captured 32,763 square miles of enemy territory. Its losses were by far the lightest of any Third Army operation: 2,102 killed, 7,954 wounded, and 1,591 missing. Enemy losses in the campaign totaled 20,100 killed, 47,700 wounded, and 653,140 captured.

Since becoming operational in Normandy on August 1st 1944 until May 9th 1945, the Third Army was in continuous combat for 281 days. It had advanced farther and faster than any army in military history, crossing 24 major rivers and capturing 81,500 square miles of territory, including more than 12,000 cities and towns. With a normal strength of around 250,000–300,000 men, the Third had killed, wounded, or captured some 1,811,388 enemy soldiers, six times its strength in personnel. By comparison, the Third Army suffered 16,596 killed, 96,241 wounded, and 26,809 missing in action for a total of 139,646 men, a ratio of enemy to U.S. losses of nearly thirteen to one.

Prague Offensive

The Prague Offensive was the last major Soviet operation of World War II in Europe. The offensive, and the battle for Prague, was fought on the Eastern Front from 6th May to 11th May 1945. This battle for the city is particularly noteworthy in that it ended after the Third Reich capitulated on 8th May 1945. This battle is also noteworthy in that it was fought concurrently with the Prague Uprising.

The city of Prague was ultimately captured by the USSR during the Prague Offensive. All of the German troops of Army Group Centre (*Heeresgruppe Mitte*) were killed or captured. The capitulation of Army Group Centre was nine days after the fall of Berlin and three days after Victory in Europe Day.

From 30th April to 1st May 1945, SS Senior Group Leader (*Obergruppenführer*) and General of Police Karl Hermann Frank announced over the radio in Prague that he



would drown any uprising in a "sea of blood." Frank was also a General of the Waffen SS. The situation in Prague was unstable. Frank knew that several Soviet Army Fronts were advancing towards Prague. More immediately, he was faced with a city population ready to be liberated.

The battle

The Soviet assault on Prague crushed the last sizeable pocket of German military resistance in Europe. The Soviet assault on Prague was carried out by 1st (under Ivan Konev), 2nd (Rodion Malinovsky) and 4th Ukrainian Fronts (Andrei Yeremenko). As well as the Soviet armies these Fronts included the Polish Second Army, the First and Fourth Romanian armies and the I Corps of the Czechoslovakian Army. The Soviet Fronts totalled more than two million troops. In order to participate in the Prague Offensive, the troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front made a forced march from south of Berlin just after they had completed their participation in the Battle of Berlin.

The Soviet force was opposed by at most 900,000 German troops of what was left of Army Group Centre commanded by Field Marshal Ferdinand Schörner: the First Panzer Army, the Fourth Panzer Army, the Seventh Army and the Seventeenth Army. In addition to battered remnants of Army Group Centre, the Germans opposing the Soviets around Prague included some corps-sized units of what little remained of Army Group South and known as Army Group Ostmark commanded by Dr. Lothar Rendulic.

On 7th May, General Alfred Jodl, Chief-of-Staff of *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* ("German Armed Forces High Command"), signed the surrender of all German forces at SHAEF. OKW had last heard from Schörner on 2nd May. He had reported he intended to fight his way west and surrender his army group to the Americans. On 8th May an *OKW* colonel was escorted through the American lines to see Schörner. The colonel reported Schörner had ordered his operational command to observe the surrender but could not guarantee he would be obeyed everywhere. Later that day Schörner deserted his command and flew to Austria where on 18th May he was arrested by the Americans.



When it came, the Soviet assault on Prague crushed any remaining Germans and relieved the Czech partisans fighting in the Prague Uprising. The uprising started on 5th May 1945. By 8th May, the Germans fighting the Czech partisans in Prague agreed to withdraw.

The Czech partisans were aided briefly by the 1st Infantry Division (600th German Infantry Division) of the Russian Liberation Army (ROA). The 1st ROA Infantry Division was commanded by General Sergei Bunichenko (or *Bunyachenko*), whose division until April 30th had continued to pledge loyalty to the Axis and to Nazi German command. The 1st ROA Infantry Division, composed of anti-Stalinist members of ethnicities from Russia, was stationed near Prague at the outbreak of the uprising and supported the Czech partisans against the Germans. The ROA was created by former Soviet General Andrey Vlasov as an anti-communist Russian force in the combat against Bolshevism. The ROA forces were attempting to get to pre-arranged positions where they could avoid the Soviets and surrender to the Americans.

By 8th May, General Bunichenko and his 1st ROA Infantry Division sought refuge with the Americans. Bunichenko, Vlasov, and the ROA forces in general were however returned to the Soviet Union, after which they were mostly condemned to the GULAG camps, or in some cases, executed as traitors.

On 9th May 1945, Soviet troops entered Prague. Some remnants of Army Group Centre continued resistance until 11/12 May (see Battle of Slivice). The left flank of the 2nd Ukrainian Front met with troops of the US Third Army (George Patton) in the regions of České Budějovice and Písek, thus completing the encirclement. Later, 1st and 2nd Ukrainian Fronts met with Americans in the regions of Karlovy Vary and Klatovy. German soldiers and ethnic German and a minority of ethnic Czech pro-Nazi civilians fleeing Prague were surprised by the advancing Soviets and completely routed. The local Czech population resumed their hostilities on the surrendered Waffen SS troops regardless of their intentions. In what the veterans of the 20th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (1st Estonian) who had laid their weapons down in May 1945 recall as the 'Czech Hell', the local people chased, tortured and



humiliated the Waffen-SS men and murdered 500–1000 Estonian POWs. Individual Soviet attacks on German civilians and the expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia continued into autumn, under the supervision of the first post-war Czechoslovak government of Edvard Beneš.



Worksheet Nr. 1

This system of fortresses was built in the time before the World War II. It was planned as the line of defence against the neighbour countries of former Czechoslovakia. Only the best Czechoslovak building companies could attend the building of these fortresses. The fortresses should make a line around the whole country.

Was this line finished?

.....

Were the fortresses used in the fight?

.....

This city lies in the Bavaria. In this city was agreed a special agreement among Germany, Italy, French and Great Britain. Accordingly this, the former Czechoslovakia lost the big part of its territory called Sudetenland.

What's the name of the city?

.....

What date was this agreement entered?

.....



The 15th March 1939 is often called as the black day in the history of former Czechoslovakia. In this date some troops entered the Bohemia and Moravia. It started the occupation of the country, which took more than 6 years.

What troops came into the country?

.....

What historical event is similar to this mentioned event?

.....

This event was one of the most important events in the World War II. The German troops attacked an island country in the north of Europe. If they would win, they would be able to occupy and control almost the whole west Europe. The German troops were defeated at the end of this event.

What event are we talking about?

.....

What was the connection between this event and the former Czechoslovakia?

.....

I was born in the 1905 in Germany. My father was a composer. I served in the navy. I liked playing violin and fencing. I fought very hard against my opponents. I worked in Bohemia. I was killed in Prague.

What's my name?

.....

Who did kill me?

.....



This place lies on the border between Poland and Slovakia, in hilly terrain. The name of the place wasn't important in the long past. It got known in the year 1944. The German troops fought here and lost. This moment is considered as the starting of liberation of the Middle Europe in the World War II.

What's the name of the place?

.....

Which troops fought against German troops?

.....

I was a very famous U.S. army general. I came to be known especially because of my activities in the World War II. I was very hard and controversial commander. Among the cities which I liberated is one of the biggest Czech cities also.

What is my name?

.....

What big Czech city did I liberate?

.....

This historical event happened at the end of World War II. in Prague. The common Czech people started uprising against German troops. It was a very hard fight because of absence of guns and number of enemies. The uprising took 5 days. You can find memorials of fallen people in the whole Prague.

What days did this event happen?

.....

How did it end?

.....

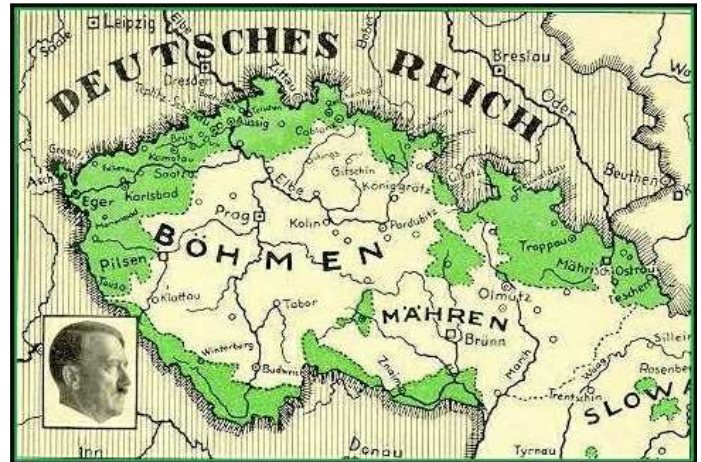
Which troops liberated Prague?

.....

Annex Nr. 1



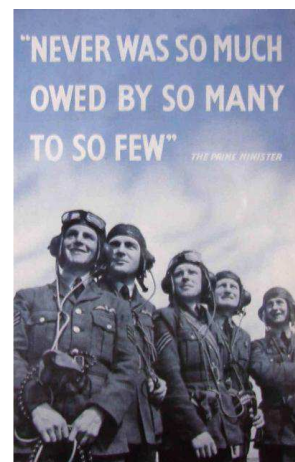
Border fortifications



Munich agreement



Occupation of Czechoslovakia



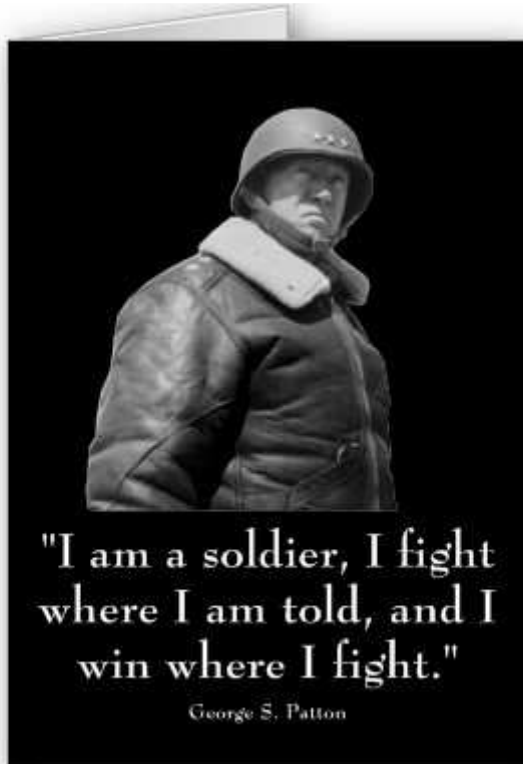
Battle of Britain



Operation Anthropoid



Dukla



General Patton



Prague Uprising



Annex Nr. 2

Triangle defence	Mussolini
Sudetenland	Wir wollen ins Reich
The independent Slovak state	Spitfire
Blood, toil, tears and sweat	Don't put the crown on your head if you aren't a king
Lidice	Ležáky
The valley of death	Ludvík Svoboda
Barricades	"We call all Czechs"
Roll up the barrels	Demarcation line
Chewing gums	Partisans